



News Release

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State Fire Marshal Advises to Clean Dryer Vents Before Winter Sets In

DECEMBER 7, 2004 - The Office of the State Fire Marshal is advising homeowners to clean out their dryer's vent. Most dryer vent fires start with a buildup of lint, which blocks the flow of air and ignites when it becomes too hot. In 2003, there were 425 dryer fires resulting in 6 injuries and 1 death in Michigan.

"Most often, poor venting is the source of the problem for dryer fires," Fire Marshal Andy Neumann said. "As most people prefer to keep their dryer pushed as close to the wall as possible, this leaves little room for the pipe, which creates a trap for lint to collect and become a fire hazard. This is why it's so important for dryer vents to be cleaned regularly."

Also, dryer venting tends to sag, if it is not guided through the rafters with rigid ducting. The curves will stop the lint from blowing out. Lint becomes trapped in the ribs of ducting, creating pockets of potentially flammable debris. This creates an even more extreme problem when the heavy winds are blowing. Debris, such as tree bark can become lodged inside, mixing with the lint, and creating an easily ignitable pile of debris.

The easiest solution: clean dryer vents regularly or have them professionally cleaned. Make sure that the dryer is operating properly. Make sure that the filter has been cleaned each time that a new load of clothes is dried; also, check the outside exhaust to see that air is escaping normally. If there are any signs that the dryer is hotter than normal, the temperature control thermostat might need servicing.

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